

## HOUSEHOLD EMPLOYMENT - PERSPECTIVE

Since the days of the cave man, mankind has attempted to relieve himself from the drudgery of work. From the first agricultural community until the present time of huge cities and big problems of money - how to get it and what best to do with it - man has sought to reduce his burdens. Some men in all ages have turned solely to God for this relief, some others - with God's gift of talents, have invented machines and developed different ways of getting jobs done, that would make man's burden lighter, and still others have turned neither to God nor to inventive talent, and have hunted for the easiest way to live, morally or immorally.

We can think of persons in all these categories. All of us want to lighten our burdens.

In the days of the Roman empire, and indeed, before that, men and women were classified in several categories. Two main ones were represented by kings and other so-called noblemen; and by persons conquered by the tribe or nation of the kings. Conquered peoples worked at all the jobs that the free - middle-class people did not like to do. They were not paid for their work, they were forced to obey orders, ~~on penalty of death.~~

However, as nations grew and as there were fewer peoples to conquer, less and less work could be done by conquered people. Money had to be paid to get a job done. We therefore saw the beginning of prosperous communities in various spots over the world; because a community was never prosperous unless a sufficient number of people earned a sufficient amount of money to buy the things other people made, and, in turn, were paid for making.

This is true today. Our prosperous communities are those in which a sufficiently large majority of citizens have sufficient money to purchase a continual flow of goods that keep the wheels of manufacture and service turning. ~~Industry~~

It has become an established fact that money is our means of exchange. We don't go one hundred miles with fifty chickens to exchange for a kitchen stove, <sup>people</sup> <sup>if there</sup> <sup>sell</sup> <sup>it</sup> <sup>without a personal trip</sup> ~~if the man who made it~~ will ~~exchange the stove~~ for fifty dollars. We all <sup>being</sup> <sup>necessary</sup> do various jobs, and receive money that may be exchanged for any marketable <sup>at all!</sup> item we want.

No longer are conquered people used for work - without pay. Right or wrong, there are no more people to conquer and force to work. World War II proved this. We must pay for work done, and the pay goes to those who do the work, who chose one job from among many.

Now let us turn to another side of the picture.

Since the time those cave men selected their wives with the aid of a huge club, by wielding it over the head of any other man possessing or wanting the particular woman, there have been different jobs that were attractive to different people. There wasn't much trouble in small tribes when the main chores were agricultural. But when tribes began to settle in one place, develop communities and build cities more and more people began to do other things. The women moved indoors and the men divided their work between agriculture and manufacture of articles that were needed in a permanent home. Diversification of labor resulted in opportunity for selection of a job by <sup>most</sup> ~~any~~ individual. With the beginning of the Industrial revolution in England hundreds and hundreds of different types of <sup>from the point of view</sup> work appeared, and now, today we have <sup>some</sup> 20,000 ways in which people just here in the United States, earn a living.

It has become a matter of opportunities of choice of one opportunity. However, there are limits to what any one individual can do. No one individual can be an expert at all the possible opportunities for people in general. Therefore individuals select one vocation from among several that they have the ability to succeed in.

Success in one field of work is important - now more so than ever before. The twentieth century ushered in a period of specialization that we still have with us. Moreover, one person can't work successfully in several differing types of jobs

at the same time.

We therefore try to select that one field, that one type of work that seems best to fit our individual circumstances, our likes and our dislikes. What one person likes someone else is surely to dislike, and what one person dislikes someone else may surely be found liking. We suit ourselves when we select a field of work in which to try for success.

Tonight we are concerned about one particular field of work, Household Employment. We have all heard about this type of work since we were children. However, I wonder how many of us have ever stopped to realize that everyone of us, everybody, has at one time and another been engaged in household work. Every parent has done or does some household work; every child does also.

Today, we are facing many types of freedom. Freedom for women, for instance. Women have been allowed, even with World War II to have a larger freedom of choice about the field of work they <sup>prefer to do</sup> ~~wish to do~~. In 1944 there was a decrease of 14% of the total of Negro women employed nationally in domestic and personal services. There was a decrease of 8% of Negro women in agriculture. On the other hand, more than six hundred thousand more Negro women were remuneratively employed in all types of work in 1944 than in 1938.

Women have a larger choice now. This is for Negro women and for white women. Among all women there are those who like to work in factories, offices, business and industry, and prefer not to remain home even though married. There are fewer and fewer women today who, as in our grandparents' day, dream of a marriage as a time for settling down in a home, cooking, darning socks, etc. Freedom brings movement.

This means that another job is created, when a woman prefers to swap her household chores - to take a job outside her home and have someone from outside come to work inside her home. Such women simply prefer the outside job to the inside job. Both are important, both have to be done.

No longer, and not now for a very long time, can we consider work as a forced measure - as conquered people were forced to work. No longer can we consider it impossible to work at but one type of job. Today there is freedom of choice - on the part of the person wanting a job, and on the part of the person wanting to employ.

Household Employment is one possible choice. Hundreds of thousands of women, of all nationalities, races, creeds, and colors, have selected household work as their means of remunerative employment. It <sup>too, should be</sup> ~~has been~~ a matter of choice. ~~They have been aware of some distinct advantages in it.~~ Many Negro women have undertaken Household Employment because of inability to get something else. Luckily this inability is not as present today as four years ago. Yet, the field is still a source of remunerative employment, and cannot be brushed aside. We still have freedom of choice and, tonight our facing some problems about this field should bring us nearer and ease of choice in this particular field. It should be attractive to thousands, unattractive to other thousands. For who like it let's improve it. It has many advantages - if it doesn't, let's make it so!